

jobs that offer better working conditions elsewhere.

At our recent subcommittee hearing on military construction and veteran affairs appropriations, Secretary Shulkin acknowledged that the VA has seen cases of documented whistleblower retaliation, and that is important, because it means that Secretary Shulkin is going to have to be vigilant so that this new legislation is not abused. In his mind, he is not seeking this legislation so that the VA can fire employees without any reason or to allow supervisors to abuse them, and I hope that is how this plays out in practice across the country, but there is going to be more risk for a workforce of 360,000 that is decentralized, where decisions are made locally, and so we will be vigilant with him and will hold Secretary Shulkin accountable for any wrongdoing.

We are still left grappling with the challenge of recruitment and retention, and unfortunately, this legislation does not address it, and it may make addressing it even harder. With nearly 50,000 vacant positions across the VA workforce, Congress needs to get a handle on this issue because these vacancies risk undermining the delivery of services and care to our veterans who rely on the VA. We can and need to do better by them.

Thank you.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE IDAHO NATIONAL LABORATORY'S ADVANCED TEST REACTOR

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, my colleague Senator JIM RISCH joins me today in recognizing the Idaho National Laboratory's achievements in 50 years of operation of the advanced test reactor. The success of the scientific mission of the advanced test reactor is a pride of Idaho and of the entire American nuclear science community.

The advanced test reactor is a unique system designed to support multiple different experiments simultaneously. It can serve as a nuclear "time machine" by testing the stresses of nuclear power 20 times faster than conventional systems. It is currently involved in research to convert weapons-grade nuclear material to reactor fuel. This will strengthen American energy independence.

The U.S. Navy's nuclear propulsion program is a key customer of advanced test reactor research. It is one of many ways in which Idahoans contribute to our national security. The advanced test reactor is also the only American source for a particular isotope known as Cobalt-60. Cobalt-60 is vital for its use in modern brain cancer treatments and is saving the lives of Americans every day.

Beyond these good works, the advanced test reactor is available to our universities. Our next generation of

scientists has access to this unique system on the condition that their research be published for the benefit of the American public. Through this and other efforts, the Idaho National Laboratory works to support current and future generations.

Congratulations to the dedicated men and women of the Idaho National Laboratory. They are the embodiment of American scientific achievement and leadership in nuclear research.●

RECOGNIZING TONGUE RIVER WINERY

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the distinct honor of recognizing the team at the Tongue River Winery, in Custer County, for having the skill, patience, and dedication required to produce quality wines on the high plains of eastern Montana. Despite a difficult growing climate, this humble, family-run operation has successfully combined vineyard and winery functions and has received numerous awards and recognition for their efforts.

The married couple of Bob and Marilyn Thaden, along with their son Josh, are the team that makes the Tongue River Winery successful; 2017 marks the fifth consecutive year that the Tongue River Winery has won the Granite Peak Award. This award is presented to the top Montana winery at the Northwest Wine Summit.

For Bob, this year marks his 50th anniversary making wine. It has also been about 50 years since he met his wife, Marilyn, so it comes as no surprise that, when asked about winemaking, he compares the process of selecting good grapes to courtship. Bob reflected, "it's like courtship, plant the wrong one and you will regret it for a long time; take your time, choose carefully, so not to be disappointed later on." Bob has selected wisely in both endeavors. His advice on being thoughtful and patient can be applied to many other areas of life.

In the years ahead, I wish Bob, Marilyn, and Josh all the best as they continue to cultivate and create uniquely Montana wines. For their efforts, I raise my glass to the team at the Tongue River Winery.●

225TH ANNIVERSARY OF BUCKSPORT, MAINE

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 225th anniversary of Bucksport, ME, an active town set along the banks of the Penobscot River. The town has a long and proud history dating back to the late 1700s, and I am pleased to join with Mayor David Keene, town officials, members of the Bucksport Historical Society, and residents as they gather for a founder's day celebration to honor the town's history.

First settled in 1763, Bucksport was incorporated in 1792 and named for its original surveyor, Colonel Jonathan

Buck. However, Bucksport's history begins long before the 18th century. The town's first known inhabitants were the prehistoric "Red Paint People" who were discovered through an archaeological dig in the late 19th century. Originally known as the territory of the Penobscot Abenaki Native Peoples, the town of Bucksport today encompasses an area surveyed by Colonel Buck in 1762. After returning in 1763, Colonel Buck built the first sawmill, store, and home, and by 1775, there were a total of 21 families living there. During the Penobscot Expedition in 1779—notably one of the greatest defeats in American naval history—the British overtook and burned the town. As a result, in 1783, the town was resettled and named Buckstown Plantation, later changed to Buckstown, and finally renamed Bucksport in 1817.

Bucksport's history is deeply engrained in the papermaking industry. In 1930, Bucksport's Maine Seaboard Paper Company opened its doors as the first paper mill on the Penobscot River. The mill and the town have experienced significant changes as the paper industry has declined, with the paper mill finally closing its doors in 2014. Despite these hardships, the town of Bucksport has opened new doors both through creative uses of the former mill site, as well as by capitalizing on the town's deepwater port, rail service, and location at the intersection of two loops of the "three Ring Binder" broadband network. The resiliency of the town is a testament to its residents' hard work, innovation, and commitment to Maine.

Bucksport is home to nearly 5,000 people and continues to grow. Bucksport is centrally located 18 miles from three major employment centers and is also home to numerous cultural and arts organizations like Northeast Historic Film, the Alamo Theater, and the Lighthouse Arts Studio. The town also features the Downeast Waterfront Walkway, a mile-long walkway along the Penobscot River with views of Fort Knox and informational panels that detail Bucksport's important past, as well as its potential for the future. I am proud to commemorate 225 years since the incorporation of Bucksport, a town that has greatly contributed to Maine's economic prosperity and a community known for providing the unique Maine experience.●

200TH ANNIVERSARY OF UTICA, MICHIGAN

• Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 200th anniversary of the city of Utica, MI. The bicentennial celebration is a historical benchmark for Utica, as well as the State of Michigan.

Located in Macomb County and often referred to as a small town with city amenities, Utica residents have always prided themselves on their high level of community involvement, rich heritage, and family-oriented values. After 200

years of change and growth, the city remains embodied in that local spirit.

Founded by Canadian pioneer Thomas Squire in 1817 and formally incorporated in 1838, Utica has a rich history. In the early pioneer days, settlers and farmers from across the United States traveled to Utica due to its close proximity to the Clinton River. At the time, Utica was known by various names, including McDougalville, Hog Hollow, and Harlow. It was not until 1829 when Americans from New York State began moving to the area and changed the name to Utica, after their home city. Utica gained the status of village in 1838 and was among one of the first towns in Michigan to do so.

The flourishing village experienced great economic growth from the agricultural industry, as well as the construction of the Detroit United Railway, Wildcat Bank of Utica, and Clinton-Kalamazoo Canal. Tragically, in both 1904 and 1905, fires erupted across the village and destroyed many businesses, residences, and the renowned Exchange Hotel. However, Utica residents demonstrated their love and commitment to the city by building waterworks in 1926, gas mains in 1930, and sewers in 1937. It was the same year, 1937, that Utica officially became a recognized city. It is testament to the longevity and vibrancy of the community that the Utica United Methodist Church, which was built in 1839 by two of the first settlers, Nathaniel and Jemima Squires, still stands today.

Today Utica is a vibrant community covering 1,114 acres of land, with affordable, safe housing, successful family-owned shops, and nationally recognized community schools. The city offers its residents a wide range of comprehensive and efficient services from festivals and 5K races, to senior nutrition programs and pinochle tournaments. Utica's fire and police department work hard to protect the city and its residents, as well as enhance the quality of life. In short, Utica is a great place to live, work, and play.

The city of Utica has a rich history, dynamic present, and bright future. As Utica celebrates this milestone, I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating its residents, elected officials, and businesses as they celebrate their rich history. I wish the city continued growth and prosperity in the years ahead.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations

which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1282. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish the Acquisition Review Board in the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1873. An act to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to enhance the reliability of the electricity grid and reduce the threat of wildfires to and from electric transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands by facilitating vegetation management on such lands.

H.R. 2131. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Chief Human Capital Officer of the Department of Homeland Security to improve consistency regarding discipline and adverse actions in the Department's workforce, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH) announced that on today, June 22, 2017, he has signed the following enrolled bill, which was previously signed by the Speaker of the House:

S. 1094. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1282. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish the Acquisition Review Board in the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1873. An act to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to enhance the reliability of the electricity grid and reduce the threat of wildfires to and from electric transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands by facilitating vegetation management on such lands; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 2131. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Chief Human Capital Officer of the Department of Homeland Security to improve consistency regarding discipline and adverse actions in the Department's workforce, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, June 22, 2017, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 1094. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-2024. A communication from the Secretary of the Senate, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the receipts and expenditures of the Senate for the period from October 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 12, 2017; ordered to lie on the table.

EC-2025. A communication from the Deputy Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to violations of the Antideficiency Act that involved fiscal years 2009-2014 Operation and Maintenance, Army (OMA), funds, and was assigned case number 16-01; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-2026. A communication from the Deputy Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to violations of the Antideficiency Act that involved fiscal year 2009 Operation and Maintenance, Army (OMA), funds, and was assigned case number 16-03; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-2027. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General John E. Wissler, United States Marine Corps, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2028. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Trade Monitoring Procedures for Fishery Products; International Trade in Seafood; Permit Requirements for Importers and Exporters" (RIN0648-AX63) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 15, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2029. A communication from the Deputy Chief Counsel, National Technical Information Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Certification Program for Access to the Death Master File" (RIN0692-AA21) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 15, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2030. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (P.L. 107-243) and the Authorization for the Use of Force Against Iraq Resolution of 1991 (P.L. 102-1) for the February 7, 2017-April 8, 2017 reporting period; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-2031. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2017-0100-2017-0112); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-2032. A communication from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the semi-annual reports of the Attorney General relative to